
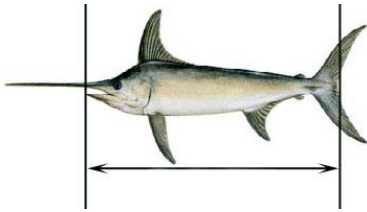


III. QUICK REFERENCE: ATLANTIC SWORDFISH REGULATIONS

| PERMITS | |
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| <p>Vessel owners must obtain a valid swordfish limited access permit (Directed, Incidental, or Handgear), an open access HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit (valid only in the U.S. Caribbean Region⁴⁵), an open access Swordfish General Commercial permit, or an HMS Charter/Headboat permit (valid on non-for-hire trips only)⁴⁶ for the vessel they are using to commercially harvest Atlantic swordfish.</p> <p>NOAA Fisheries does not issue new commercial swordfish limited access permits. To enter a limited access fishery, fishermen must obtain a permit from a permit holder who is leaving the fishery. Limited access permits are transferred between vessels and are subject to upgrading restrictions. Atlantic Directed and Incidental swordfish permits are valid <i>only</i> when held in conjunction with both a shark limited access and Atlantic Tunas Longline permit.⁴⁷</p> <p>An Incidental HMS Squid Trawl permit may be obtained by valid <i>Illex</i> squid moratorium permit holders and authorizes the retention of swordfish caught incidentally using trawl gear, subject to target catch requirements.⁴⁸</p> <p>Prior to renewing or obtaining an Atlantic Directed or Incidental swordfish limited access permit, both the vessel owner and operator must become certified at a Protected Species Safe Handling, Release and Identification workshop if fishing with longline (or gillnet gear with sharks).⁴⁹ Contact the Southeast Regional Office at (727) 824-5326 for information on commercial swordfish permits.</p> | |
| RETENTION LIMITS | |
| North Atlantic Swordfish (north of 5° N latitude) | |
| Directed permit | No trip limit (when the directed fishery closes, fishermen may retain 15 swordfish per pelagic longline trip, two swordfish per handgear trip, and no swordfish per harpoon trip) ⁵⁰ |
| Incidental permit | 30 swordfish per trip ⁵¹ |
| Handgear permit | No trip limit (when the directed fishery is closed, fishermen may retain two swordfish per handgear trip, and no swordfish per harpoon trip) |
| HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit | 2 swordfish per vessel per trip ⁵² |
| Swordfish General Commercial permit and HMS Charter/Headboat permit (on non-for-hire trip) | <u>Northwest Atlantic region:</u> 3 swordfish per vessel per trip <u>U.S. Caribbean region:</u> 2 swordfish per vessel per trip <u>Gulf of Mexico region:</u> 1 swordfish per vessel per trip <u>Florida Swordfish Mgmt. Area:</u> 0 swordfish per vessel per trip ⁵³ (See Figure 1 on page 13 for regions) |
| Incidental HMS Squid Trawl permit | 15 swordfish per trip, including during a directed fishery closure ⁵⁴ (provided squid constitute not less than 75 percent of the total catch on board and trawl gear is the only gear onboard the vessel) ⁵⁵ |
| South Atlantic Swordfish (south of 5° N latitude; only vessels fishing with pelagic longline gear may retain) ⁵⁶ | |
| Directed permit | No trip limit (when the directed fishery closes, no swordfish may be retained) ⁵⁷ |
| Incidental permit | No retention allowed ⁵⁸ |

| AUTHORIZED GEARS | |
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| North Atlantic Swordfish | |
| Directed permit | Bandit, handline, harpoon, rod and reel, buoy gear*, longline** |
| Incidental permit | Bandit, handline, harpoon, rod and reel, longline** |
| Handgear permit | Bandit, handline, harpoon, rod and reel, buoy gear* |
| HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit | Bandit, handline, harpoon, rod and reel, buoy gear* |
| Swordfish General Commercial permit | Bandit, handline, harpoon, rod and reel, green-stick ⁵⁹ |
| HMS Charter/Headboat permit (on non-for-hire trip) | Handline, rod and reel ⁶⁰ |
| Incidental HMS Squid Trawl permit | Squid trawl ⁶¹ |
| South Atlantic Swordfish may only be taken with pelagic longline. ⁶² | |
| <p>*If fishing with buoy gear, you may not deploy more than 35 flotation devices or individual buoy gear per vessel. Buoy gear must be released and retrieved by hand. Additional restrictions on the gear apply.⁶³</p> <p>**If longline gear is onboard a vessel while a swordfish is onboard or offloaded, it will be assumed that the swordfish was harvested by longline.⁶⁴ If fishing with longline gear, both the vessel owner and operator must become certified at a Protected Species Safe Handling, Release and Identification Workshop.⁶⁵ All commercial longline vessels <i>must</i> have handling and release gear and corrodible hooks on board. Fishermen using pelagic longline gear must also comply with other hook, bait, and gear requirements.⁶⁶ Vessels with pelagic longline gear onboard are not authorized to possess, retain, transship, store, or land hammerhead sharks (great, smooth, and scalloped), oceanic whitetip, or silky sharks.⁶⁷ Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) requirements apply to pelagic longline vessels.⁶⁸</p> | |
| <p><u>Other Gear Notes:</u> You cannot retain any swordfish when gillnet is onboard; if gillnet is onboard, it will be assumed that the swordfish was caught using gillnet gear.⁶⁹ There are several closed areas, some of which apply to all gear types.⁷⁰ See the appropriate section of this guide, the HMS webpage, or 50 CFR part 635 for more details and locations of area closures.</p> | |
| MINIMUM SIZES | |
| <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Cleithrum to Caudal Keel (CK) - a curved measurement, from the point on the cleithrum that provides the shortest possible measurement along the body contour to the anterior portion of the caudal keel.⁷¹</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL) - a straight line, not following the body contour, from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the caudal fin.⁷²</p> </div> </div> | |
| North and South Atlantic Swordfish | |
| Head (or any portion of head) removed ⁷³ | 25 inches (63 cm) CK ⁷⁴ |
| Head attached | 47 inches (119 cm) LJFL. ⁷⁵ The bill of the swordfish may be removed forward of the anterior tip of the lower jaw. ⁷⁶ |

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| Shark-bitten | A swordfish that has been damaged by shark bites may be retained only if the remainder of the carcass meets the appropriate minimum size. ⁷⁷ |
| LANDING RESTRICTIONS | |
| Swordfish must be kept in whole or dressed form through landing. ⁷⁸ Dressed indicates a fish with the head, guts, and fins removed but does not include removing the backbone, halving or otherwise reducing the carcass. ⁷⁹ Swordfish cannot be filleted or cut into pieces at sea. ⁸⁰ | |

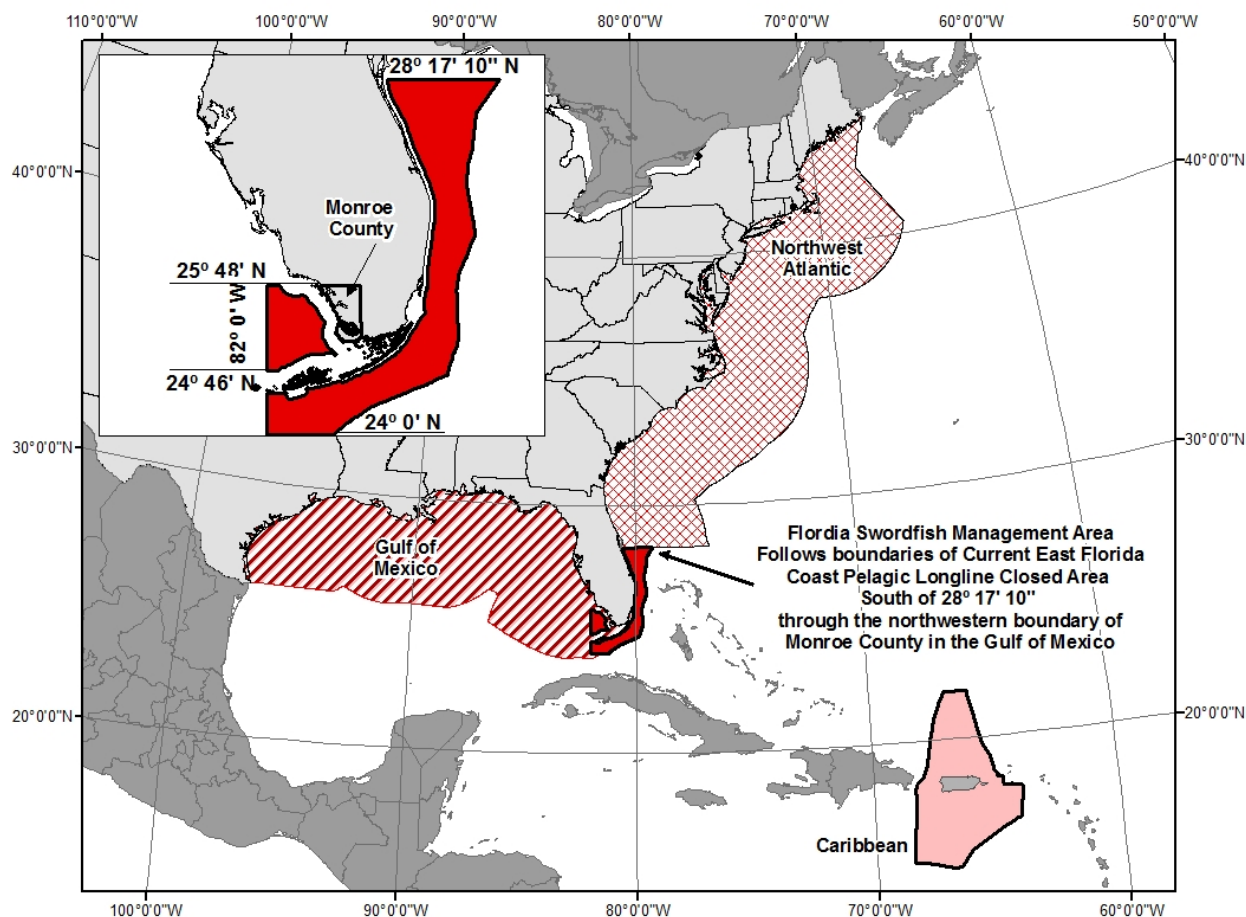


Figure 1 Swordfish Management Regions for Vessels Issued a Swordfish General Commercial Permit or an HMS Charter/Headboat Permit (on a non-for-hire trip)

For vessels issued either a Swordfish General Commercial permit or an HMS Charter/Headboat permit (on a non-for-hire trip), retention limits are established regionally. The regions are: the Florida Swordfish Management Area (see Figure 1); the Northwest Atlantic region (federal waters along the entire Atlantic coast of the United States north of 28°17'10" N. latitude); the Gulf of Mexico region (any water located in the EEZ in the entire Gulf of Mexico west of 82° W. longitude); and the Caribbean region (the U.S. territorial waters within the Caribbean).⁸¹ The regional retention limits may be adjusted in-season using pre-established criteria.⁸²